

School Year 2009-2010

15 Fun Things to Do With Your Child

Ways to expose your child to the unique, the interesting, and the everyday joys of learning

Your children spend more time out of school than they do in school – which means they have many learning opportunities at home and in the community.

Spending as little as 30 minutes a day engaging your child in some activities can make a world of difference.

Below are some fun, easy and free things you can do to support and expand those learning opportunities for your child:

- In the City
- On-Line (“Virtual Trips”)
- At Home

In the City	3
On-Line (Virtual Trips)	4
On-line Museum Trips	4
On-line Performances	5
At Home	7
Exhibits in D.C.	10

In the City

Visit a library

The D.C. Public Libraries have activities throughout the winter break.

Explore a museum

Our City has many great museums and hundreds of great exhibits. Museums can be a low-cost (most museums are free) way to take your children on a trip that can expose them to many new things – and spark their interests in ways that may surprise you. Click on the links below for exhibition highlights.

See the animals

The National Zoo is open from 9a.m.-5p.m. and has daily events. You can also take your child to see animals in a local pet store.

Go to a live performance

Live performances are listed in the local newspapers. The Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage has free daily performances. For information about performances go to: <http://www.kennedy-center.org/programs/millennium/schedule.html>. Want to get your child excited? You can show him or her clips from past performances. Just click on the performers name to access those clips.

On-Line (Virtual Trips)

You may not be able to get to a museum or live performance, but there are many on-line opportunities to take your child on a virtual trip.

On-line Museum Trips

Smithsonian American Art Museum and the Renwick Gallery

<http://www.americanart.si.edu/education/activities/online/index.cfm>

The site provides links to various museum exhibits and includes links to interactive guides. Notables on this site:

¡del Corazón! Latino Voices in American Art is an exhibit that goes behind-the-scenes and uses photographs, videos, and other resources to reveal the artists and their works. Explore each section to learn how they express universal cultural experiences.

<http://www.americanart.si.edu/education/corazon/index.cfm?l=e>

Meet Me at Midnight is an interactive art lesson and mystery for you and your child to work on together. Put together by the Smithsonian Museum of American Art, this on-line tour of the museum is sure to teach you and your child about the art and what you can visit in D.C.

http://www.americanart.si.edu/exhibitions/online/midnight/default_flash.html

National Gallery of Art

Explore the on-line tours (<http://www.nga.gov/onlinetours/index.shtm>) – then visit the museum! In addition to exhibits, the ice skating rink is open (there is an admission fee for the rink and skates). For more information go to <http://www.nga.gov/ginfo/skating.shtm> or call (202) 216-9397.

The National Zoo

If you can't get to the zoo in person, check out what the animals are doing via webcam!

<http://nationalzoo.si.edu/animals/webcams/>

Metropolitan Museum of Art

<http://www.metmuseum.org>

Under “Musuem Kids” you’ll find “Explore and Learn” (<http://www.metmuseum.org/explore/>) – and great on-line experiences for you and your child. In this section you and your child can:

- explore several famous pieces of art through a “sing-a-long” (warning: it’s a catchy tune!)
http://www.metmuseum.org/explore/sing-along/video_apples.html

- learn more about the influences and methods of Vincent Van Gogh (there's a great surprise at the end for your budding artist.) http://www.metmuseum.org/explore/van_gogh/index.html
- take a walk through Romare Bearden's "The Block" http://www.metmuseum.org/explore/the_block/index_flash.html.

Museum of Science and Industry

<http://www.msichicago.org>

For fun and easy hands-on activities go to <http://www.msichicago.org/online-science/activities/>

You'll find things like Analyze Candy Using Chromatography (think, "CSI: Candy"), How to Build a Lever, Make Music with Straws. There's also a game called "Simple Machines," which teaches you about using simple machines such as pulleys and levers <http://www.msichicago.org/online-science/simple-machines/activities/simple-machines-1/>).

On-line Performances

The Kennedy Center

The Kennedy Center website has hours of video of past performances at the Millennium Stage. The extensive archive gives you the chance to expose your child to the performing arts ranging from ballet, opera, gospel music, Irish folk dance, blue grass and much more. The Family/Kids selection includes performances ranging from musical numbers, to puppet shows, to dancing. Go to <http://www.kennedy-center.org/programs/millennium/archive.html>

Here's a sample of what you can find:

- German Marionette version of Rumpelstiltskin: <http://www.kennedy-center.org/explorer/videos/?id=M3622&type=A>
- Indonesian Gamelan Music and Shadow Puppet Show: <http://www.kennedy-center.org/explorer/videos/?id=M2420&type=A>
- Voices of Malian Women: <http://www.kennedy-center.org/explorer/videos/?id=M1574&type=A>
- Chinese Traditional Music Ensemble: <http://www.kennedy-center.org/explorer/videos/?id=M2439>
- Abajo de la tarima with SON LUNA: <http://www.kennedy-center.org/explorer/videos/?id=M3467>
- The Wild Zappers: <http://www.kennedy-center.org/explorer/videos/?id=M2794>
- Christon "Christylez" Bacon: A native Washingtonian, hip hop artist Christon "Christylez" Bacon is known for diverse instrumentation and unlikely musical combinations: <http://www.kennedy-center.org/explorer/videos/?id=M3765>

DC Public Library

The DC Public Library site has a section called “downloadable material.” Using your library card you can download ebooks, audiobooks, movies, and music to your home computer! Go to:

<http://www.dclibrary.org/books-movies-music/downloads>

There are more than 1,200 selections in the children’s and young adults section.

<http://overdrive.dclibrary.org/63F42DAD-47B1-49CC-88B1-37C8019DFD33/10/391/en/BrowseYouth.htm>

The DC Public Library also provides access to Scholastics’ “BookFlix” animated video books which include a “read along” feature. Click here to enter: <http://dclibrary.org/kids/videobooks>. Remember, you will need to enter your library card number to enter this site.

Don’t have a library card? No problem! You can get a library card on-line.

<http://dclibrary.org/services/getacard>. Once you get the card number you can begin downloading and accessing the on-line material immediately. (Just remember you have to go into a library branch within 30 days to get an actual card.)

Earth and Beyond

Download Google Earth (<http://earth.google.com/>) and go anywhere in the world or universe! The site allows you to take your child on trips to see streets in Johannesburg, Tokyo, Paris or Atlanta. Additional links allow you to see images of Earth, the Moon and footage from the Hubble Telescope.

At Home

Have a “Talk Show”

You or child can be the hosts. The topic: whatever your child wants to discuss! It could be about what they did that week, something they read, issues they’ve been thinking about, or just about them. If possible, make it a festive occasion by having your child dress up, have them sit in a special place, and invite others to watch the live show.

Play cards

Grab a deck and let the games begin! Many card games teach and reinforce skills such as matching, sequencing, strategizing, collaboration, competition, and following instructions. (Don’t where to start? Consider Go Fish, War, Rummy, Hearts, Spades. If you need to learn the rules, do a quick on-line search “playing card games.”)

Play a board game

Like cards, board games also teach and reinforce many skills you child uses at home and in school.

Put on a play

Ask your child to act out part of a story he or she has read or ask him or her to use their imagination and make something up.

Have a puppet show

After your child reads a story (or makes one up), have them create a puppet about the character, then act out the story using the puppets.

Puppets:

There are many ways to create puppets. For example, you can draw a character on a piece of paper, have your child design and color it, cut it out and tape it to a straw, pencil or pen.

Or you can use a brown paper lunch bag. Have your child decorate the bag with crayons, markers, pen or pencil.

Create a book

Show your child that she or he is an author and illustrator by creating blank book for them to design and fill.

Making the book:

The book cover can be made out of construction paper, the cardboard from a cereal box (if both sides of the box have writing on them, tape or glue a blank piece of paper or the white side of wrapping paper on both sides) or plain white paper.

The inside pages can be any type of blank paper (copy, notebook, construction paper). Insert as many pages as you like.

Simply place the blank inserts in between the book covers and staple the left side – you’ve created a blank book.

Your child can design the cover, give the book a title and sign it as the author. Inside he or she can write or draw anything – it’s their book!

Suggestions:

- Have your child write or draw about something they’ve done or learned each day of the winter break.
- Have your child write down questions they have about anything and then leave blank space. As your child learns the answers, she or he can write them in the book.
- Ask your child to write down or draw their dreams: what do they want to be when they grow up? What do they want to learn in school? What do they think the future will be like?

Have Story Time

Set aside time to have your child read to you from a book, magazine, newspaper, labels on food (for example, cereal, pasta, frozen vegetables, etc.) Reading with your child for as little as 15 minutes a day can make a big difference

Another option is to listen to an audio book (check out the selections available through the DC Public Library).

Invite your Child to Movie Night at Home

Select a movie to watch with your child at home. Afterwards have a discussion about the characters, the plot, different possible endings for the movie.

Play school

Set aside time each day for your child to teach you something they learned.

Talk about school

Talk to your child about school – what they like and dislike; what they find challenging and interesting. Talk about *what you would like your child to accomplish* and find out what *your child wants to accomplish*. This is a great time to talk about college, careers, setting goals and priorities. You may even want to write down three goals your child has for the rest of the year and post them some place you and your child can see them. Then help your child work towards those goals.

Exhibits in DC

National Museum of American History

Holidays on Display” Exhibition. Examines the art, industry, and history of holiday display across the United States. Focusing on parading culture and department store retail display, primarily between the 1920s and 1960s, when holiday displays were considered commercial endeavors equally rewarding for the American public, the exhibition showcases numerous photographs, postcards and rendering illustration of parade floats and window displays—including the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day parade and Marshall Field & Company Christmas windows—as well as objects relating to the early creation of these displays

“The African Presence in México: From Yanga to the Present.” The African Presence in México: From Yanga to the Present is a traveling exhibition developed by curators Sagrario Cruz-Carretero and Cesáreo Moreno at the National Museum of Mexican Art in Chicago. The exhibition examines the history, culture, and art of Afro-Mexicans, and begins in the colonial era and continues to the present day.

“Creating Hawai’i”. This artifact case examines the perceptions of popular imagery of Hawai’i, including the exoticism, the distant land, the paradise and juxtapose it with the reality of Hawai’i’s long and intimate role within American history through commerce, military significance, and immigration.

“The Scurlock Studio and Black Washington: Picturing the Promise.” Nearly a century’s worth of photographs from the Scurlock studio form a vivid portrait of black Washington, D.C., in all its guises—its challenges and its victories, its dignity and its determination. The exhibition features more than 100 images created by one of the premiere African American studios in the country and one of the longest-running black businesses in Washington. Highlights include cameras and equipment from the studio and period artifacts from Washington.

Freer Gallery of Art

“Enter to the Arts of the Islamic World.” The arts of the Islamic world flourished in a vast geographic area extending from Morocco and Spain to the islands of Southeast Asia. Although distinct in their cultural, artistic, ethnic, and linguistic identities, the people of this region have shared one predominant faith, Islam. The works on view here represent the three principal media for artistic expression in the Islamic world: architecture (both religious and secular), the arts of the book (calligraphy, illustration, illumination, and bookbinding), and the arts of the object (ceramics, metalwork, glass, woodwork, textiles, and ivory). The works date from the 9th to the 17th century.

“Children at Play in Chinese Painting.” Children at play in fragrant gardens or at work in lush fields have been a recurring theme in Chinese art over the past two millennia. Objects and paintings dating from the first through the twentieth century, complemented by ceramics and ivory carvings, depict children playing in urban and rural settings. Relationships among family members, from infants in mothers’ arms to siblings splashing in a tub of water, are explored through various media. Common childhood delights of catching butterflies and skipping rope are juxtaposed with lively images of boys herding oxen and romping in fields, all lovingly depicted in engaging scenes throughout the centuries.